DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 476 936 UD 035 681

TITLE	The Partnership for Working Families: Best Practices in Cities.
INSTITUTION	City Policy Associates, Washinton, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.; United States Conference of Mayors, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	2003-05-00
NOTE	59p.
AVAILABLE FROM	U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1620 Eye Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20006. Tel: 202-293-7330; Web site: http://www.usmayors.org.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Child Care; Elementary Secondary Education; *Employment Opportunities; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Family Income; Job Training; *Low Income Groups; *Social Services; Tax Credits; *Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS	Earned Income Tax Credit; Wealth; Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

This report describes 39 successful initiatives that illustrate what 27 cities have been able to accomplish for working families across four goal areas: improving job access and quality employment for residents of underemployed neighborhoods (e.g., connecting quality labor-seeking employers in metropolitan markets with placement and training organizations serving high-needs neighborhoods); rewarding and reinforcing the work efforts of welfare-to-work and other low-income working families (e.g., city outreach and tax assistance campaigns that help ensure that all eligible low-income families apply for and receive their federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit refunds); increasing the savings, assets, financial sophistication, and wealth of low-income families (e.g., promoting Individual Development Accounts); and strengthening the community services and institutions most crucial to working families (e.g., improving schools, public safety, child care, and/or human services). Each description includes the name of a contact person from whom additional information is available. (SM)

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THE PARTNERSHIP FOR WORKING FAMILIES

BEST PRACTICES IN CITIES

MAY 2003

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This report was made possible through the partnership of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and The U.S. Conference of Mayors. It was prepared by City Policy Associates, Washington, D.C. Additional copies of the report are available from The U.S. Conference of Mayors, 1620 Eye Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20006, (202) 293-7330, or at www.usmayors.org.

INTRODUCTION

The Partnership for Working Families of The U.S. Conference of Mayors and the Annie E. Casey Foundation is designed to focus greater national attention on:

- the challenges facing working families in America -- challenges made more difficult by economic downturns;
- the employment and training and other tools that exist to respond to these challenges; and
- the continuing efforts of cities to help low-income working families achieve some measure of economic success.

Part of this Partnership effort involves the identification and dissemination of information on individual city initiatives which have proven successful in helping working families become self-sufficient in today's economy.

In March Boston Mayor Thomas M. Menino, the President of the Conference, invited mayors to submit information on individual efforts they felt had contributed, or were continuing to contribute, to the economic self-sufficiency of working families in their cities. Among the kinds of "best practices" sought were those which:

$ Improve job access and quality employment for residents of under-employed neighborhoods B e.g., connecting quality labor-seeking employers in metropolitan markets with the placement and training organizations serving high-need neighborhoods;

$ Reward and reinforce the work effort of welfare-to-work and other low-income working families B e.g., city outreach and tax assistance campaigns that seek to ensure that all eligible low-income families apply for and receive their federal and state Earned Income Tax Credit refunds;

$ Increase the savings, assets, financial sophistication and ultimately the wealth of low-income families B e.g., promoting Individual Development Accounts, savings accounts in which the deposits of eligible low-income families are matched by public or private funds;

$ Strengthen the community services and institutions that are most critical to working families B e.g., improving schools, public safety, child care and/or human services.

This document contains descriptions of 39 successful initiatives completed or underway in 27 cities. As a group they illustrate what these cities have been able to accomplish for working families across these four goal areas. Each description includes the name of a contact person from whom additional information is available.

MUNICIPALITY OF BAYAMON
MAYOR RAMON LUIS RIVERA, JR.

Proyecto Nacer, Inc.

Proyecto Nacer, Inc. is aimed at preparing first-time pregnant adolescents and their immediate families who lack parenting skills, emotional support and economic resources to become self-sufficient and independent. Adolescent participants and their families are offered transportation, a breastfeeding center, baby-sitting while at school or work, child-rearing workshops, parenting orientation, mentoring, household visits, counseling and psychological help, vocational workshops, employment, and coordination of other services. Unique in Puerto Rico, the program trains participants in a "family incubator" until they become self-sufficient and capable of effectively managing their own lives. Proyecto Nacer, Inc. receives funding from the Municipality, the Commonwealth State Legislators, the Child Care Program, the Child and Adult Food Program, and several private donors.

The target neighborhood is highly involved and identified with the program. The children from the community participate in summer camps which enable them to interact with residents and learn about family life, including parenting skills. Pregnant adolescents participate in workshops to develop social and technical skills, and are provided with employment during their pregnancy. At work they receive training and develop supervisory skills that can be used in their parenting roles.

The adolescent participants' legal and administrative issues are handled by the program in legal and legislative forums, and the program's work in this area is coordinated with agencies that specialize in representing adolescents. Funding is available for adolescents who work and study and need to support their families. Mentors, counselors and special instructors guide and assist those with parenting responsibilities in their school assignments so that they are able to devote quality time to their children.

During the first two years of the program, participants were either school dropouts (40 percent) or at risk of dropping out (50 percent). During this period, none of the adolescent participants were accused of child abuse, all received positive backing from their families, and all were involved in work, study, or both. In addition:

- 92 percent have postponed a second pregnancy for a period of more than two years;
- 97 percent have continued their studies uninterrupted; and
- 89 percent have not requested protection from domestic violence.

Administrators believe the success of this program demonstrates that 1) investments should be targeted to prevention programs which generate results on a long-term basis, and 2) the way to break the cycle of social dependency is to focus on high risk populations in a holistic manner, with flexible, immediate and uninterrupted services that guarantee intense and confidential treatment by specialized personnel.

Information is available from Mayra López, Planner, at 787-396-4995 or planners@coqui.net.

CITY OF BOSTON
MAYOR THOMAS M. MENINO

Boston After-School for All Partnership

In Boston, two-thirds of children ages five to 14 live in families with a single parent or two parents who work outside the home. With fewer than half the low-income families in Massachusetts with school-age children receiving assistance that pays for out-of-school programs, many working families are left without a choice and are forced to leave their children unsupervised after school. Although an estimated 17,000 children currently participate in after-school programs in Boston, at least another 15,000 would participate if more affordable, accessible, and high-quality programs were available.

The Boston After-School for All Partnership is a public-private funding collaborative of corporations, foundations, Harvard University, and the City, formed in 2001 to support out-of-school programs for Boston's children and youth. It is the largest public-private partnership benefiting children in Boston's history. The partnership emerged from the recommendations of the 2000 report of Mayor Menino's Task Force on After-School Time and the need to provide additional children with access to high-quality programs, and the Mayor spurred its creation. It has three complementary goals – serving more children in programs, enhancing children's learning experiences, and creating a sustainable financing system. Each of the 13 partners made a commitment to invest new funds over five years to achieve the goals, and current commitments total over $24 million. In addition to the City, partners include: the Barr Foundation, Boston Foundation, FleetBoston Financial, Fleet National Bank as Trustee of the L.G. Balfour Foundation, Harvard University, Hyams Foundation, Liberty Mutual Group, Massachusetts 2020, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, New Profit, Inc., United Way of Massachusetts Bay, and Verizon Foundation.

The largest funders of the partnership are the City and Harvard, each with a $5 million commitment over five years. In the first year Mayor Menino directed resources to expand 36 after-school programs operating at 23 Boston Community Center sites. The $1 million in City funds provided 700 Boston youth with a variety of after-school opportunities including tutoring and assistance with homework; art, dance, and music instruction; sports clinics; and cultural field trips. Licensed school-age child care is also provided. This commitment by the City is in addition to the $17 million that it invests separately in after-school and youth programming.

Programs that receive resources from the partnership support children's academic achievement, offer a safe environment with caring and supportive adults, and provide a critical resource to working parents. In the first year alone, members of the partnership distributed $8 million to 150 organizations. Along with each partner's direct individual funding, the partnership launched three initiatives to expand after-school programs at community-based organizations, schools, and churches across the City – the Community After-School Initiative (which supports organizational development, facilities improvement, and scholarships for low-income children in community-based programs), the School Sites Initiative, and the Faith-Based After-School Initiative (which received a $6 million federal grant over three years from the Compassion Capital Fund). Partners have pooled resources to fund each initiative and work with intermediary organizations, providers, and the Boston Public Schools to accomplish their goals.

The partnership also has commissioned new research on improving children's learning during their out-of-school hours and expanding out-of-school-time opportunities for teens.

As a public-private venture with a diverse membership, the partnership recognizes the need for collaboration with others stakeholders – providers, parents, research institutions, intermediary organizations, and youth – to create a lasting investment in the infrastructure of the out-of-school-time system. Members seek to build upon, strengthen, and maximize the effectiveness of existing community resources, and are fostering an environment that allows funders and out-of-school-time providers to significantly address the needs of the system.

The partnership faced the challenge of meeting the diverse interests of members who represent a wide range of public, corporate, and grant-making institutions having varied constituencies. It addressed this challenge by supporting members in their individual funding decisions while encouraging collaboration, providing opportunities for discussions and shared learning, and creating strategic initiatives with the support of multiple partners.

Information is available from Howard Leibowitz, Director, Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Relations, at (617) 635-3817 or Howard.Leibowitz@cityofboston.gov.

Boston Earned Income Tax Credit Campaign

The City of Boston estimates that approximately 13,000 eligible low-income households did not file tax returns in 2002 and as a result were not able to access refunds and the earned income tax credit (EITC). In addition, many low-income families filing for the tax credit use commercial tax preparers who frequently urge them to obtain "refund anticipation loans," which carry high fees and interest rates. The Boston EITC Campaign provides tax filing services at no cost to Boston's low- and moderate-income and immigrant communities and helps taxpayers receive their refunds quickly through direct deposit. The Campaign, a member of the National Tax Assistance for Working Families Campaign, promotes better access to mainstream financial services, encourages and promotes individual and community asset building, and provides education in personal money management and financial literacy.

The Boston EITC Campaign demonstrates that a well-organized coalition is an effective method for reaching diverse populations. Each member of the collaboration – City, State, and federal government organizations, regulators, foundations, community-based organizations, and members of the local business community – represents a key constituency and forms a critical component of the Campaign. In addition to Mayor Menino and the City, members include the Internal Revenue Service, Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Boston, Action for Boston Community Development, Codman Square Health Center, Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation, American Association of Retired Persons, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Boston Housing Authority, Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations, Boston Cares, Boston College, Jewish Vocational Services, Greater Boston Legal Services, and Legal Advocacy Resource Center. The Internal Revenue Service provides free software and training materials to the sites. Together, the Campaign and the IRS train site staff and volunteers. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, Boston Foundation, Citizens Bank, Sovereign Bank, One United, and the law firm of Nixon Peabody provide financial support.

Critical to the success of the Boston EITC Campaign are the volunteers from the community who receive free basic tax law and software training which they then use to prepare tax returns for clients at a neighborhood tax site. Volunteers also engage in neighborhood outreach activities and plan events that attract residents. They greet community members at the tax sites and provide basic financial literacy information. In the future, volunteers will assist with financial counseling and provide instruction in financial literacy in classes organized at community tax sites throughout the year.

Reaching disenfranchised and immigrant communities has been a challenge for the Campaign. Coalition members have developed educational materials designed for new residents, immigrants, and those taxpayers who are not aware of the EITC. The Campaign includes an evaluation component which allows for continued revising of messages and outreach strategies to reach targeted populations such as these.

During the current tax season, the Campaign opened 16 free tax preparation sites across the City. Volunteers and staff prepared a minimum of 100 returns at each site; the result was the return of $9 million in tax refunds, including $1.5 million through the EITC, to Boston's low-income families. The Campaign recently incorporated a financial literacy component, and staff and volunteers plan to continue offering workshops throughout the year. Mayor Menino and other members of the collaboration work with area employers to encourage them to provide information on the EITC to their employees. Local banks participate in the Campaign by providing staff who offer financial counseling services and access to no-cost checking accounts.

Information is available from Mimi Turchinetz, Office of Jobs and Community Services, at (617) 918-5259 or Mimi.Turchinetz.jcs@cityofboston.gov.

Serving Workforce Development Stakeholders

Boston, like many other cities, has a long history of bringing together key workforce development stakeholders on a regular basis to share information, provide networking opportunities and solve problems. Meetings are convened by funding source as well as across funding sources, depending on the issue and the desired outcome. Because Boston's workforce development system is decentralized, this practice has proven to be effective in improving the service delivery system, to the benefit, ultimately, of working families.

A number of system-wide staff development needs were identified through stakeholder meetings over the past several years and, in particular, through the Welfare-To-Work experience. As a result, Boston has expanded its role of bringing people together to include the brokering or delivery of staff development and training as a systems enhancement strategy.

Boston's adult workforce development system consists of multiple, independent, community-based organizations and career centers that provide job readiness, skills training, and placement services to economically disadvantaged and unemployed adults. Many of the system's participants have undiagnosed learning disabilities. (National studies estimate that as many as 60 percent of adult welfare recipients have a learning disability.) In Massachusetts, recipients are not screened for learning disabilities. In an economy that increasingly demands

credentials and high levels of literacy and numeracy, workers who cannot participate successfully in skills training and basic education programs will be unable to compete for high wages. Boston's service providers wanted to improve their ability to meet the needs of these participants.

The City's strategy in response to this need began with a one-day conference in the fall of 2002 for members of Boston's workforce development community and affiliated social service organizations. The conference provided 100 attendees with training in:

- modifying classroom instruction and communication methods to accommodate a wide range of learning styles and abilities;
- identifying participants and program applicants who might have a learning disability; and
- coaching and supporting individuals who wish to participate in clinical diagnostic assessments.

Conference attendees received a comprehensive "learning disability guide" with information and resources on screening, referral sources for clinical assessments, practical classroom tips and strategies, and other topics. The conference was followed by a series of "ask the expert" sessions and workshops, starting with the topic, "Non-native Speakers of English and Learning Disabilities." Conference attendees were invited to meet with a group of peers to share best practices and get advice on modifying aspects of their program, instructional or communication methodology. These sessions were designed for groups of 15 to 18 participants and facilitated by an education expert.

The positive impact of the conference and follow-up sessions is seen in several areas. Program staff:

- learned about the most effective screening tools and strategies for identifying applicants and program participants who may have learning disabilities;
- increased their knowledge of best practices in instructing and communicating with adults with learning disabilities;
- acquired knowledge of how learning disabilities affect people across languages or while learning another language; and
- learned about the difference and confusion between learning disability and language acquisition stages.

Also, as a result, Boston has established the framework for a "peer learning community" to support the implementation of new practices and methodologies. This system-wide staff development initiative receives $10,000 in Workforce Investment Act Performance Incentive funds and $12,000 in private foundation donations.

Information is available from Daniel J. Singleton, Deputy Director for Adult Services, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, at (617) 918-5240.

CITY OF BURLINGTON
MAYOR PETER A. CLAVELLE

AmeriCorps*VISTA Program

Burlington's AmeriCorps*VISTA initiative addresses a variety of problems related to assisting low- to moderate-income and working class families, both in the City and across Vermont. A*VISTA members serve in non-profit organizations, assisting in building their capacity to better serve the needs of working class families. These national service members are spearheading projects assisting families with financial asset development, providing literacy and employment services to refugee and immigrant families new to the community, organizing block-by-block neighborhood associations which connect neighbors and families, helping to get working class families more involved with local schools and parent-teacher organizations, and meeting other needs.

The 45-member A*VISTA program, administered by Burlington's Community and Economic Development Office, is funded by the federal Corporation for National and Community Service and by local non-profit organizations which contribute to a "cost share" to help offset the cost of providing A*VISTA members with monthly living stipends, training, and other support services. The City also offers significant in-kind support in the form of office space and supplies, computer and phone use, and other items.

Whenever possible, community members are involved in the planning and implementation of A*VISTA-sponsored projects. An example is the annual Old North End Spring-Up, a day of community action and celebration held in Burlington's poorest neighborhoods. For this, residents are invited to help identify and plan a variety of neighborhood improvement projects, with the hope that eventually they will take on these projects and others as their own.

A barrier often encountered by the City's A*VISTA members when working with families in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods is apathy – the families' feeling that City government does not and cannot work in their favor. Burlington officials say that their A*VISTA program has helped tremendously in overcoming residents' apathy, as they often feel much more comfortable confiding in someone they perceive as a "volunteer" as opposed to a "bureaucrat."

Historically, A*VISTA members also enter into their one year of service with a high degree of enthusiasm and interest in serving as catalysts for change within the community – qualities that are "highly contagious" among the residents and families they come into contact with.

Of course, shortfalls in a variety of federal funding sources also present barriers to providing services essential to families with low and moderate incomes. A*VISTA members who are placed at non-profits to help "increase the capacity" of the organizations often spend their time researching and developing grants and other fundraising strategies. This often produces considerably more resources for agencies serving families and, ultimately, more services.

City officials believe the impact of their A*VISTA program has been significant. Since 1992 it has:

- supported over 100 area non-profits with over 200 AmeriCorps*VISTA members;
- provided 30,000 children and families with literacy-based services and activities;
- provided over 35,000 low-income residents (an average of 17,000 annually) with a variety of human services;
- raised $4.7 million for area agencies and projects; and
- recruited and supported over 5,000 community volunteers who have provided almost 200,000 hours of service to residents and families.

And as each "service year" passes, they say, more is learned about the most effective ways for the City's A*VISTA members to connect with and support families and family initiatives in Burlington and around Vermont.

In Burlington, the long-running A*VISTA program is recognized as producing the biggest "bang for the buck" in service to the community. Mayor Clavelle, in fact, was referred to as the "VISTA Mayor" by the former CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, Harris Wofford.

Information is available from Yiota Ahladas, Assistant Director for Community Development, at (802) 865-7168 or yahladas@ci.burlington.vt.us.

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
MAYOR MICHAEL A. SULLIVAN

Cambridge Employment Program

While One-Stop Career Centers are valuable resources for self-directed professionals and for customers eligible for publicly-funded career counseling and job search assistance, City residents who constitute the middle-ground between the professional classes and the population eligible for public assistance often have a difficult time obtaining the assistance they need at such Centers. These working class families typically face one or more barriers to finding employment which will meet their cost of living – barriers such as limited English literacy, limited or outdated skills, and difficulty communicating and/or coping in typical workplace settings, often because of a disability which falls below the threshold of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation or disability benefits.

To meet the needs of Cambridge residents not adequately served by existing programs, the City established the Cambridge Employment Program (CEP). Operated by the City, CEP assists unemployed and underemployed residents in obtaining employment and/or the education or training needed to improve their employment opportunities. Services include individualized career counseling and job search assistance which is provided at no cost to program participants. Because CEP staff members maintain connections to a broad array of area service providers, they can help clients deal with some of the underlying issues that prevent them from being successful in their search for jobs. And because staff members spend time getting to know clients, they can help them clarify their goals and make the most appropriate matches to jobs.

Approximately half of the CEP budget is funded by municipal tax revenues, and half through a contract with the local Housing Authority, which receives U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development funding under the Resident Opportunity for Self Sufficiency program.

CEP serves both individuals and families and, since January 1, 2002, has registered adults from 132 families, approximately half of whom were working at the time of registration and half of whom were unemployed. These families had diverse educational backgrounds: 28 percent had completed a college degree program (associate, bachelors, or graduate), 35 percent had earned a high school diploma or GED, and 14 percent had neither degree nor diploma. Participants came from 17 linguistic communities, with 45 percent listing English as their first language.

The most formidable barriers to employment for CEP participants are their language skills and limited U.S. work histories, their lack of training opportunities, and their need for child care. Funding from the Housing Authority, which pays for classes offered by the City's Adult Basic Education provider, has greatly enhanced public housing residents' access to literacy and computer skills training, and scholarships offered by the Authority have made other classes and training more affordable for them. Clients not affiliated with the Housing Authority, however, have a much harder time finding affordable training programs.

To date, CEP has helped approximately one in four of the adults from the target families obtain employment, at an average wage of $11.51 per hour. It has also helped another 20 percent access classes and training, primarily for English literacy and computer skills.

Cambridge officials believe that, without the Cambridge Employment Program's individualized assistance, offered on an open-door basis, many of the clients would fall through the cracks of a traditional workforce development program.

Information is available from Ellen Semonoff, Deputy Director, Department of Human Services, at (617) 349-6200 or esemonoff@cambridge.ma.gov.

CITY OF CHICAGO
MAYOR RICHARD M. DALEY

Chicago Anti-Predatory Lending Initiative

Concerned that predatory lending had led to an increase in foreclosures in the City, Mayor Daley launched a multi-faceted strategy to create program and policy initiatives to combat predatory lending on the local, state and federal levels.

On August 30, 2000, the City passed a predatory lending ordinance, the first of its kind in the nation. The ordinance requires that any financial institution wishing to do business with the City must sign a pledge stating that neither it nor any of its affiliates engages in predatory lending. It precludes home repair contractors from receiving payments directly from lenders, enabling homeowners to withhold payment for substandard or nonexistent work. The ordinance also authorizes the City=s Department of Consumer Services to take action against contractors who engage in consumer fraud, unfair competition or deceptive practices, especially those practices that may result in foreclosure.

Complementing the City=s predatory lending ordinance is the SAVE HOME Campaign, an anti-predatory lending public education campaign. The City developed SAVE HOME to educate and warn the public about the dangers of predatory mortgage lending, and to improve awareness about access to conventional credit. It uses informal networks B including community groups, religious institutions, and grocery stores B along with more traditional communication media B including Chicago Transit Authority buses, neighborhood signs, and radio advertisements B to promote the Campaign.

A referral line B 1 (866) 728-3466 B advises residents how to avoid predatory loans. Calls are answered by operators at the City=s 311 center. Operators receive information from callers for the Chicago Department of Housing before referring callers to the appropriate agency. Referrals are based on the callers= situation and services available. Callers also receive a brochure, available in both English and Spanish, which provides additional information on predatory lending.

An advisory committee comprised of representatives of community organizations, lenders, regulators and several City departments was convened to develop both the message and the logistics of the Campaign. The City budgeted a significant amount for the Campaign and received additional financial support from the Fannie Mae Foundation, Freddie Mac, and several lending institutions. The supporters of the Campaign, including its advisors and financial contributors, are referred to as the Fair Credit Alliance.

At the state level, protections against predatory lending are contained in the Illinois Fairness in Lending Act, and the Illinois Office of Banks and Real Estate, which is the primary regulator of state-licensed mortgage lenders, also has approved rules prohibiting a variety of predatory lending practices. Information on how to contact this Office to register complaints against state-licensed lenders is found on the Department of Housing website.

Information is available from Marti Wiles, Coordinating Planner, Department of Housing, at (312) 747-9481 or mwiles@cityofchicago.org.

Self-Sufficiency Calculator

The Chicago Income and Expense Calculator, created by the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) from a self-sufficiency standard established by Wider Opportunities for Women and Women Employed, estimates the cost of living in Chicago for 71 different family types.

The Calculator simplifies the way in which self-sufficiency is determined for both individuals and case managers assisting job-seeking clients. Automating the process eliminates cumbersome paperwork and allows each client to walk away with his or her self-sufficiency status, as well as a place to start when deciding on a career path.

In 2000 the Chicago Workforce Board adopted the self-sufficiency standard to satisfy the Workforce Investment Act's requirements that clients reach a certain level of self-sufficiency before exiting the One-Stop system. MOWD went one step further, using the data to develop a web-based Calculator that simplified the process by which self-sufficiency was determined.

Job developers and case managers in Chicago were trained on the use of the Calculator to help clients determine what types of jobs to apply for. In addition, an Internet link to the Calculator has been added to the resource room computers in the One-Stop Centers. Case managers find the new system easy to use and helpful. Clients get immediate information about their financial status, which helps them establish realistic career goals. The Chicago Income and Expense Calculator is available online through the MOWD Web site at www.ci.chi.il.us/WorkforceDevelopment/selfsuff.html.

Information is available from Liz Libby, Communications Director, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, at (312) 746-7458.

Dislocated Worker Services Marketing Campaign

In the spring of 2001 – a time of mass layoffs and plant closings in Chicago and other parts of the nation – the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) initiated a full-scale marketing campaign to draw attention to the dislocated worker programs offered to City residents. Called "Everybody Back to Work," the campaign sought to help people determine whether they qualified for re-employment services and, if so, to encourage them to call the City to find the closest location to receive them. The marketing components of the campaign included paid advertisements on trains and buses, paid radio ads, public service announcements in both Spanish and English, and a poster and postcard drop at aldermanic offices and City service centers.

The response to the campaign was overwhelming. Thousands of Chicagoans called MOWD for more information (the transit ads alone generated more than 2,600 telephone inquiries), and thousands more poured into centers to receive career services aimed at helping them get back to work.

Information is available from Liz Libby, Communications Director, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, at (312) 746-7458.

CITY OF DENVER
MAYOR WELLINGTON E. WEBB

Incumbent Worker Training Program

Denver's Incumbent Worker Training Program helps working families move out of poverty by providing career ladders and advancement opportunities in high-demand occupations. It is supported by City general funds, employer contributions, and a small portion of State Adult Discretionary Workforce Investment Act funds.

The program is administered through the Employer Services Division of the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD), a unit established in November 2000 to improve services to employers through the Denver Workforce Centers. Mayor Webb requested and received a $500,000 appropriation of general funds to help support the Division, the mission of which is to address the needs of businesses in the areas of recruitment, training and retention. A shortfall in the City budget has resulted in decreased funding in the last two years, but there continues to be a great deal of support for this successful program.

Incumbent worker training dollars, which go substantially to train lower-skilled individuals for positions which will bring higher wages, require a one-to-one match by employers. This helps stretch training dollars and provides the One-Stop system with opportunities to backfill the positions vacated by the employees who are promoted. In the last three years, employers have contributed almost $1 million in cash and in-kind contributions to continue the program.

Incumbent worker training must lead to a higher wage and/or a nationally recognized certificate. An example is the Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) certificate training provided for Certified Nurse Aides (CNAs) and Personal Care Providers (PCPs) by the Community College of Denver; this training is provided on-site at seven long-term-care facilities. Currently, more than 100 CNAs and PCPs are at various stages of training for the LPN certificate at nursing homes in Denver. Additionally, about 46 individuals will begin CNA-to-LPN training at three local hospitals this year, and five additional long-term-care facilities have received technical assistance from the MOWD to begin the CNA-to-LPN program without MOWD funds. The MOWD will also begin an LPN-to-RN program with two hospitals this year.

In addition to their work in the health sector, MOWD staff members have worked with employers in the printing and publishing and telecommunications industries to upgrade the skills of incumbent workers. And this year the Office is helping fund a program to raise the skill levels of paraprofessionals in the Denver Public Schools.

Information is available from Ledy Garcia-Eckstein, Assistant Director for Employer Services, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, at (720) 865-5641 or lgarcia@mowd.org.

Denver Earned Income Tax Credit

The federal Earned Income Tax Credit is a tax incentive that has been shown to significantly improve the rate of job placement and job retention for low-income working families, particularly those who have recently left the welfare rolls. In January 2002 Mayor Webb announced the launch of the Denver Earned Income Tax Credit, which provides a 20 percent match of the federal EITC for Denver residents with children. In the first year of the Denver EITC initiative, more than 6,200 families benefited from the credit; the average check was $415. The Denver EITC is supported by Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) funds that are intended to assist both the families still on welfare and the much larger number of families that are working but remain poor. Denver is the first local government in the nation to offer an EITC funded with TANF dollars.

National studies show that the EITC helps families overcome obstacles to work by providing much-needed resources to cover immediate bills, and to pay for housing, transportation, training, and other needs that directly affect an individual's ability to keep working. Beyond being one of the most effective work support and poverty reduction programs, the EITC gives the taxpayer the "bigger bang for the buck" that is particularly important in the current economic climate. Ninety-nine cents of every dollar allocated to the Denver EITC program is going directly to working poor people, in contrast to most federal assistance programs for low-income families that consume an average of 16 to 20 percent of every dollar for overhead.

In addition, the time it takes for the low-income individual to complete the application process has been reduced from several hours to less than 10 minutes, and this has increased the participation rate by more than 600 percent. The Denver EITC piggybacks on the federal EITC application process; the next application deadline for the Denver EITC is August 15, 2003.

Information is available from Elisabeth Alkire, Tax Credit and Asset Development Project Director, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development at (720) 865-5660 or Alkire@mowd.org.

Savings Plus Individual Development Account Program

With one-third of all Americans and two-thirds of African-Americans asset-poor, the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, in partnership with Mile High United Way and a number of local community-based organizations, conducts the Savings Plus Individual Development Account Program to help low-income Denver families build assets as a way to secure long-term financial stability. The program provides a 4:1 match for participants who are saving for a specific asset or investment – a first home, small business capitalization, or post-secondary education, for example.

The program is supported by a variety of local foundation grants and federal dollars allocated under the Assets for Independence Act and the Community Development Block Grant. Local community partners ranging from an affordable housing organization to small business

development centers provide specific asset counseling in the form of personal financial training, first-time homebuyer workshops, and business classes for IDA participants.

The greatest challenge faced by this program is in utilizing a variety of funding streams with different and sometimes inconsistent requirements. For example, some of the funders require that participants live in certain neighborhoods in the City or use the money for a specific asset purchase. While these challenges remain, the MOWD has been able to utilize a database it developed for the local Earned Income Tax Credit program to send direct mail about this IDA opportunity to individuals who meet the requirements of the various funding streams, and this has proven successful. By piggy-backing on the eligibility information already obtained through the local EITC initiative, and the customer traffic at City Workforce Centers, the MOWD has been able to conduct the outreach and enrollment for the IDA with unprecedented participation rates and historically low administrative costs. The MOWD has currently enrolled many IDA participants who are able to purchase their own home, start or expand a small business, or return to school.

Information is available from Elisabeth Alkire, Tax Credit and Asset Development Project Director, Mayor's Office of Workforce Development, at (720) 865-5660 or Alkire@mowd.org.

CITY OF EAST ORANGE
MAYOR ROBERT L. BOWSER

Youth 2000 Initiative

Like many communities across the nation, the City of East Orange has faced, over the past 10 years, the tragedy of rising youth violence and crime in addition to unemployment, substance abuse, family domestic problems, and lack of educational commitments. The East Orange Police Department knows that youth ages 12 to17 are most likely to commit violent crimes around 3:00 p.m., when most schools are closed for the day. They also know that juvenile crime increases in July and August, when schools are out for summer vacation.

In 1998 the City established a Youth Development Agenda which included the creation of a year-round Youth Employment and Training Program having two distinct components. The first, the Summer Work Experience Program (SWEP), is a six-week summer employment program for East Orange youth between the ages of 14 and 18. The number participating in this component is determined by the availability of the City's funds, which are budgeted annually. For the past five years the City has partnered with the Colgate-Palmolive Company, which provides a $20,000 annual grant (half in cash and half in products) to support youth employment. East Orange is the smallest city, and the only New Jersey city, chosen to participate in Colgate's nine-city initiative. Youth are placed largely in public sector jobs in day care centers, the municipal court, schools, and City departments.

The Youth 2000 Initiative is the private sector component of the program. It is a year-round employment program serving both in-school and out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and 24. The "Y2" initiative has adopted the School-to-Work concept, connecting classroom experience to workplace requirements by bringing together employers, industry professionals and educators to assist the program participants to compete for jobs in a highly competitive labor market upon graduation from high school or college. Employers are asked to pledge summer, fall, and after-school job opportunities. Prior to placement with a private sector employer, all youth are required to participate in a "Job Smart Academy," a five-day intensive pre-employment skills program. The Youth 2000 Initiative is the largest private sector program in Essex County.

The goal of the Bowser administration and the Youth 2000 Initiative is to meet the needs of local businesses and corporations by preparing youth for the workplace environment. In addition, involving youth in an after-school work-readiness program minimizes the idle time that permits misdemeanor juvenile criminal activity, and promotes the self-esteem and self-awareness that improves scholarship and encourages graduation.

Each year the Mayor hosts a parent's forum to discuss both employment opportunities for youth and parents' responsibilities in the employment process. He also hosts a kick-off breakfast for the Summer Jobs Campaign; community and business leaders are invited, and pledges for both summer and year-round jobs are solicited. The Youth 2000 Initiative encourages everyone to "Remember Your First Break, Remember Your First Job!"

Information is available from M.J. Peterson, Division of Employment and Training, at (973) 677-8914 or mjpeterson@eastorange-nj.org.

CITY OF FORT WORTH
MAYOR KENNETH L. BARR

Fort Worth After School

Quality after-school programs are critically important to working families and a priority in the City of Fort Worth. Now in its third year, Fort Worth After School is providing free, enriching after-school programs on 52 school campuses in neighborhoods with high numbers of low-income families and above-average crime rates. Founded as a partnership between the City and the Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD), the program began during the 2000-01 school year. The City and the school district each provided half of its $2.2 million budget.

The issues driving the development of after-school programs in Fort Worth are similar to those in many other communities across the United States. They include:

- the need for safe environments in the after-school hours for children with working parents;
- the need to increase children's contact with caring adults who are positive role models; and
- the involvement of children in enriching activities that can improve their relationships to schools and their academic performance.

Fort Worth After School is governed by a Coordinating Board with representatives from the City, FWISD, the Crime Prevention Resource Center, and Tarrant County Juvenile Services. Day-to-day operations are overseen by three administrative employees of FWISD.

At the campus level, school principals and their parent advisory committees have a choice: They can employ approved, qualified non-profit organizations, such as the YMCA or Communities in Schools, to run the programs, or they may use allocated funding to develop a site-based or self-managed program using school personnel. Each program must offer homework help plus three of the following five activities: fine arts, sports and recreation, community service, character development and life skills, and academic enrichment. Fort Worth officials say working parents appreciate the opportunities given to the children to have extra assistance to complete their homework at school, particularly parents who do not speak English or those who are unable to help with special subject matter.

During the planning process, a task force of City and FWISD staff members carefully considered issues of funding, governance, standards, accountability and third-party evaluations. Through the Coordinating Board, work continues on quality improvement, sustainability and program expansion. Annual reviews performed by an outside evaluator help identify areas for improvement and areas of strength and provide an impartial assessment of the program. Officials stress the importance of having frequent and open dialogue between program partners at both the elected official level and top staff level; this serves to remove barriers of turf and tradition and to strengthen bridges and build trust.

Information is available from Kathy Livingston, City Manager's Office, at (817) 871-6129 or Kathy.Livingston@fortworthgov.org.

CITY OF HARTFORD
MAYOR EDDIE A. PEREZ

Youth Employability Skills Academy

The kinds of job readiness skills that are essential to securing and remaining in a job were not found among the Hartford youth who were involved in the Summer Youth Employment Program operated by the Capital Region Workforce Development Board (CRWDB). The young people in the program didn't understand the importance of being on time for work, having a positive attitude, dressing in a professional way, or having good interviewing skills and a good resume.

Year after year, local businesses would decry the lack of job readiness skills possessed by young people in the City, and their dissatisfaction was reflected in a downward spiral of summer employment offers. The situation hit rock-bottom in 2001 with the placement of only 20 young workers in private sector positions. The Summer Youth Employment Program was at risk of being eliminated – not because of lack of funding, but because of lack of job offers. The CRWDB response was the creation of the Youth Employability Skills (YES) Academy.

The YES Academy is held during the school system's spring vacation period. For the youth enrolled in the Academy, the main objectives are to increase knowledge and understanding of workplace expectations regarding behavior, attire, punctuality, interviewing skills, and resume development. Among the Academy experiences are:

- One-on-One Mentoring – Students have opportunities to speak and work with young executives and human resource executives in Connecticut.
- Interview Tips and Techniques – Students are able to walk away with usable interview techniques obtained from the human resources coaches. Students are put through training sessions with a heavy emphasis on role-playing.
- Team-Building Exercises – Students are put on teams to build a rocket out of balloons – an exercise that teaches them the importance of teamwork in the business world.
- Resume Building – Students leave the Academy with a complete resume.
- Graduation Ceremony – A graduation ceremony highlights the students' hard work and accomplishments.
- Job Fair – An exclusive Job Fair is held for the graduates, to assist in placing them in summer jobs.
- Employment Specialist Team – This team is responsible for creating relationships with area businesses, to help secure positions for the youth.

Through various partnerships, the Academy has created learning opportunities and a learning atmosphere. These partnerships include the City, Hartford Public School System, Hartford Hospital, MetroHartford Regional Economic Alliance, and Connecticut Business and Industry Association. The modest cost of the YES Academy, $54,000, is covered by various local and state sources and CRWDB discretionary funds.

In its first year the Academy program was completed by 17. youth, 145 of whom secured summer positions – an 83 percent success rate. Hartford officials say the key to a successful

YES Academy is to bring together the school system to recruit students, local employers to provide energetic executives to guide them, and a local Workforce Investment Board to assist in the coordination of all the activities.

Information is available from Nilda Torres, Youth Program Manager, Capital Region Workforce Development Board, at (860) 522-1111 or ntorres@capitalworkforce.org.

CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
MAYOR JEREMY HARRIS

Welfare to Work Program

Honolulu's Welfare to Work (WtW) Program, with its focus on the use of subsidized employment contracts, has succeeded in placing hundreds of participants in jobs. Participants in the program are referred primarily from the Department of Human Services' First to Work (FtW) program. DHS Case Managers are responsible for identifying eligible individuals from the targeted population of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families recipients who are considered "hardest to employ." Problems faced by this target population include the need for child care, poor motivation and self-esteem, poor work history, non-completion of high school or GED program, substance abuse, and long-term dependency on welfare assistance.

Each participant who meets all the eligibility criteria for the WtW program is assigned to an Employment Consultant who works with the Case Manager and the participant to develop a Comprehensive Employment Strategy (CES); the CES spells out the sequence of services and activities that will help reach the individual's employment goal. Strategies are aimed at engaging local business participation in the program, and integrating WtW services and activities with on-going community-based economic development efforts on Oahu.

Strategies that help participants reach the ultimate goal of placement in an unsubsidized job which holds the potential for economic self-sufficiency may include Work Experience, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, and Job Creation. As a strategy, Work Experience has been particularly successful. It provides for a planned, structured learning experience in a public or private sector workplace, on either a full- or part-time basis, over a limited period of time. Program funds are used to pay participants during their training period; unpaid work experience is termed "volunteer work." Labor standards apply in any work experience environment where there exists an employee-employer relationship as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act.

An example of a successful Work Experience strategy is found in the WtW program relationship with the Tripler Army Medical Center (TAMC). Of the total 765 participants that the program has placed at more than 100 work experience sites, 156 have been placed at TAMC. Of these, 68 were either hired by TAMC or went on to other unsubsidized employment. All of these have been employed for more than seven months and are still employed at wages averaging $9.15/hour and reaching a maximum of $17/hour. Over 80 percent of these participants are employed in some capacity within the medical field.

Honolulu officials believe that employment barriers faced by the target population can be overcome with active outreach and marketing campaigns that are designed to promote the advantages of training and employing welfare recipients. Such campaigns, they say, should highlight both participant and employer success stories that illustrate how both have benefited by working cooperatively. For PY 1999, Hawaii received nearly $4.72 million from the U.S. Department of Labor for the State's Welfare-to-Work effort; Honolulu's program was launched with just under $2.4 million of this grant.

Information is available from Nani Fife, Welfare Programs Manager, at (808) 843-0733, ext. 229.

CITY OF HOUSTON
MAYOR LEE P. BROWN

Houston Asset Building Coalition

The Houston Asset Building Coalition is a partnership of the Mayor's Citizens' Assistance Office, the Internal Revenue Service, area financial institutions, government agencies, and other community organizations. Its mission is to:

- improve community awareness of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit through a coordinated marketing campaign;
- expand access to free tax preparation assistance sites and increase volunteer participation at these sites; and
- connect EITC recipients to asset building opportunities through financial literacy training and by establishing bank accounts and Individual Development Accounts.

An analysis of EITC claims in tax returns filed for 2000 suggested the potential benefits of, and need for, an aggressive EITC campaign in Houston. That year, 239,421 working families received the federal credit; the average refund was $1,813. Based on a report by the General Accounting Office indicating that 25 percent of eligible families fail to claim the EITC, City officials calculated that an additional 60,000 families may have been eligible for over $108,780,000 in EITC refunds. The also calculated that an outreach campaign that increased EITC filers by 10,000 would represent an addition of $18,130,000 to the Houston economy.

Research on EITC claims also underscored the importance of an aggressive awareness and outreach campaign for the Houston business community. It showed that 80 percent of EITC recipients use the credit to pay bills, such as rent and utilities, or to pay for better housing or transportation, or to meet education needs. Further, EITC benefits increase workers' take-home pay at no cost to their employers, and helping workers support themselves and their families can reduce turnover in the workplace.

During the summer of 2002 Mayor Brown challenged Houston's community, business, faith-based and social service organizations to come together in a partnership to help those most in need take advantage of the poorly-claimed EITC. In August 2002, the first meeting of what would become the Houston Asset Building Coalition (HABC) was held in City Hall; it was well attended by a diverse cross-section of the social service, faith-based and business communities.

The Mayor's Citizens' Assistance Office (MCAO) and the local IRS office provide the basic staff support for this new non-profit organization, and other partner organizations pitch in their resources whenever possible to meet Coalition needs. For example, in early February 2003, all partner organizations provided some level of volunteer resources to conduct a free City-wide tax preparation fair for several hundred low-income families at Houston's convention center. The fair helped kick off the 2003 filing season, during which HABC would sponsor and coordinate over 40 free tax preparation sites throughout the City. These sites were hosted at City libraries and multi-service centers, churches, and other community centers. The MCAO and other community agency staff help promote the services throughout the targeted community through direct outreach. The educational and financial institutions provide the bulk of the tax preparation volunteers and assist with financial literacy workshops. This month, Mayor Brown

will join HABC in recognizing over 200 volunteers who were involved in HABC-sponsored activities.

Information is available from Richard Cantu, Director of Citizens' Assistance, at (713) 247-2511 or Richard.cantu@cityofhouston.net.

CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS
MAYOR BART PETERSON

Fostering Commercial Urban Strategies

Fostering Commercial Urban Strategies (FOCUS) is a pilot commercial and economic development initiative aimed at bringing commercial development back to historically underserved Indianapolis neighborhoods. The purpose of the collaboration is to build long-standing relationships that connect neighborhoods and their Community Development Corporations (CDCs) with the business community in order to rebuild and revitalize urban commercial markets.

The collaboration represents an attempt to make a systemic change in the planning, advocacy and delivery of commercial development projects in core Indianapolis neighborhoods. It is designed to give these neighborhoods a level of control in the economic development initiatives that will affect them most, with the ultimate goal of restoring goods, services, and jobs. Along with the City, the key partners in FOCUS include the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), the Indianapolis Coalition for Neighborhood Development, and the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce.

FOCUS is directed in part by an Advisory Council, chaired by Mayor Peterson, which includes volunteers from local government, development, banking, and business, along with community leaders. Other components include a Steering Committee made up of primary partner representatives, and four working teams. FOCUS is supported by the Indianapolis Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and other participating entities.

As of the fall of 2002, FOCUS had completed, or had underway, several activities in each of its five programmatic areas. For example:

- To develop new ways to market urban areas, FOCUS created the City's first Economic Development Website; contracted with Shorebank Advisory Services to analyze five market studies for neighborhoods; and developed and distributed a FOCUS newsletter.

- To increase active commercial development and investment in core neighborhoods, the initiative administers the Local Agent Program which provides economic development staff at the neighborhood level. These agents have directly assisted over 90 businesses and completed over 28 façade improvements, leveraging over $1 million in private investment.

- To further develop neighborhood expertise and capacity, LISC has inaugurated two Main Street demonstration sites (Fountain Square and East 10th Street) and is promoting neighborhood staff participation in local and national training on economic development, smart growth and New Markets Tax Credits.

- To alleviate existing barriers, the initiative is creating Indianapolis's first small business development loan fund, and is working with the City to provide grants and loans for strategic brownfields redevelopment.

- To build sustainability and working models, FOCUS is building an infrastructure for a strengthened delivery system for commercial development at the neighborhood level, and is spearheading the collection of County-wide data for an economic development plan for neighborhoods.

Information is available from Melina Kennedy, Director, Economic Development, at (317) 327-7456 or mmkenned@indygov.org

Family Investment Centers

Indianapolis's Family Investment Centers, which serve the goal of making services more accessible to the City's families, are part of a pilot initiative in three neighborhoods. The pilot is a partnership of, and is supported by, the City, the State of Indiana, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Centers provide comprehensive, unified services for Indianapolis families and children. They are not a "bricks and mortar program;" rather, they represent an effort to provide simplified access to services by building on existing neighborhood-based services. The government and non-profit providers involved in this effort are partnering with neighborhoods to develop and operate the human services delivery system in new and better ways. Together, the partners are identifying priorities, obstacles and opportunities. Community centers, community-based operations, or faith-based facilities could become neighborhood hubs for Family Investment Centers, eventually coordinating support services, education, job training, job placement, and other opportunities for neighborhood residents.

Neighborhood residents are equal partners in designing the pilot centers and serve as members of the neighborhood councils that guide them. Residents also participate in a Resource Council and a Policy Council that support all three pilot sites.

The Family Investment Centers have the support of State partners such as the Family and Social Services Administration, Department of Correction, Department of Health, and Department of Workforce Development. Program operators believe that what the State partners learn at this pilot stage could help make access to many human services easier and more effective for individuals and families across the State.

Changing the way that neighborhood residents and governmental service providers interact has been a big challenge, officials say. Residents have been urged to help build, not just react; State agency staff have been encouraged to "think outside the box" and take risks. The results to date are seen in changed relationships and in unique opportunities and partnerships that would not have otherwise existed.

Information is available from Jane Henegar, Deputy Mayor for Public Policy, at (317) 327-3611 or jhenegar@indygov.org.

Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign

The Indianapolis Asset Building Campaign is aimed at helping Marion County's working families, including immigrant families, take advantage of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and other opportunities to gain financial self-sufficiency.

The Campaign is a broad coalition of community partners led by Mayor Peterson. The partnership includes businesses, non-profit organizations, community agencies, governmental entities, and educational institutions. It is funded through in-kind donations and grants from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Efroymson Foundation.

There are three major Campaign activities:

- $ First, the Campaign conducts an outreach and marketing campaign to educate eligible taxpayers and employers about the EITC.
- $ Second, it creates Volunteer Income Tax Assistance sites throughout the County that are staffed by trained volunteers who provide free tax preparation services to families.
- $ Third, to assist families in connecting with existing resources, the Campaign provides information about financial literacy and financial education opportunities available to them.

The strength of the Campaign, officials say, is the collaboration of so many organizations around the goals of marketing, education, volunteer recruitment and tax preparation. While all of the organizations involved willingly took on many tasks that were necessary to make the effort a success, the biggest challenges were encountered in recruiting volunteers to provide tax preparation services and in engaging the business community. Both of these challenges were met through the active participation of Mayor Peterson in informing business leaders of the initiative and in seeking their involvement. Businesses both informed employees about opportunities to volunteer for the Campaign and used information provided by the Campaign to inform their employees about the EITC.

Information is available from Ellen Quigley, Director, Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee, at (317) 327-3862 or equigley@indygov.org.

CITY OF KANSAS CITY, KANSAS
MAYOR CAROL S. MARINOVICH

Earned Income Tax Credit Outreach Campaign

Kansas City's Earned Income Tax Credit Outreach Campaign started in 2001 with a coalition of partners that included the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, the United Way of Wyandotte County, Catholic Charities, the Archdiocese of Kansas City, and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The Campaign's initial effort focused on distributing flyers describing the availability of free tax preparation in the City. Officials quickly realized that, with one site at City Hall that was open during the day, and the El Centro site, which focused on serving persons with limited English proficiency, there was not enough free tax preparation capacity in the City.

In the summer of 2002 officials began planning the addition of a Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site specifically targeting two zip code areas. Donnelly College volunteered its facility for e-filing the tax forms – a much faster filing process – and Catholic Charities recruited volunteers, particularly lead volunteers, to coordinate the site, which operates Tuesday and Thursday evenings and on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Housing Authority and the local School District 500 agreed to include information on the tax service in their mailings.

A press conference held with U.S. Representative Dennis Moore announced the opening of the VITA site at Donnelly College and encouraged eligible working families to take advantage of the benefits due them through the Earned Income Tax Credit.

To date the EITC Outreach Campaign has filed more than 200 returns at the new site alone and has produced more than $183,000 in tax credits for families in the community. Promotion of the service was limited to IRS preprinted materials containing a local phone number that gave callers information on hours of operation and instructions on what to bring to the VITA site. The materials were distributed to schools and churches in the targeted zip codes.

Kansas City plans to seek the additional support and volunteers needed to extend current EITC outreach efforts to more zip codes in the community. A meeting to establish interest in a larger Kansas City coalition is planned; the goals are to engage all of the services in the community so that all can be promoted, and to provide education to families who continue to utilize some of the more predatory services available to them.

Information is available from Erika Dvorske, Director of Research and Development, United Way of Wyandotte County, at (913) 371-3674 or edvorske@unitedway-wyco.org.

CITY OF LAS VEGAS
MAYOR OSCAR B. GOODMAN

Child Care Improvement Grant Program

Securing quality child care is a continuing problem for the majority of working class families across the nation. In Nevada, as of December 2002, 1,054 child care providers were reported statewide, and only 14 child care centers offered higher-than-average quality care that met national accreditation standards. Three of these centers are located within the City of Las Vegas; obviously, many more are needed.

In 1997 the City was awarded $150,000 from the federal Child Care Development Fund and the State's Department of Education, Training and Rehabilitation to demonstrate a pilot program that addressed quality child care concerns. The Child Care Improvement Grant (CCIG) Program was developed to offer mini-grants to neighborhood center-based facilities. The goal was to improve the quality of child care through education and training, facility rehabilitation, and the purchase of modern equipment and learning materials. The CCIG program has helped more than 100 center- and faith-based providers purchase shade covering to protect the children from the harsh summer weather, block walls to allow for better security for the children, safer playground equipment for age-appropriate and healthy play, and computers and educational software to help children become computer-literate.

In 2001 the CCIG program expanded to include family and group care providers. Since 1997, the City has received $861,000 in additional funding for the program, based on previous years' successes. These funds have enabled the City to touch the lives of more than 3,000 children enrolled in neighborhood-based child care. In 2002 the City reconfirmed its commitment to quality child care by participating in the Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Program. Child Care Health Consultants provide services that incorporate national best practices for the health and safety of children in child care settings.

By combining the CCIG and CCHC programs, and by working very closely with Business Licensing and the Clark County Health District, the City helps providers comply with minimum standards while giving them the opportunity to apply for funding to help cover the costs of improvements needed to meet the higher national accreditation standards. This "two pronged" approach to facility improvement and greater technology use aims to give providers meeting minimum standards the same opportunities as those meeting higher standards. Las Vegas officials say that, through the CCIG and CCHC programs, the City has demonstrated that quality child care can be attained.

Information is available from Tiffany Jackson, Management Analyst II/Childcare Health Consultant, Neighborhood Services Department, at (702) 229-6510 or tjackson@ci.las-vegas.nv.us.

CITY OF LONG BEACH
MAYOR BEVERLY O'NEILL

Even Start Family Literacy Program

Throughout the last decade, Long Beach has seen tremendous growth in the need for services provided to the low-income working poor family, to the welfare recipient, to limited English-speaking populations, to low-skilled or no-skilled community residents, and to children in need of intensive services beyond the public school curriculum. The need for services is reflected in studies showing that people at the lowest literacy levels cannot perform tasks at elementary or middle school grade levels, and in studies showing that the number one indicator of a child's academic success is the parent's level of education.

Long Beach officials recognize that employed residents with low literacy skills are unable to secure high-paying jobs and so are unable to become economically self-sufficient. To address this, the City's Even Start grant integrates the school system's family literacy services with the comprehensive workforce programs offered through the City's premier One-Stop Career Transition Center.

The services that are combined within the Family Literacy Program are provided by a variety of public and private agencies:

- The Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), the City's co-applicant for the grant, provides expanded family literacy services, expanded child care, facilities, and in-kind staffing contributions.
- The school district's Occupational Skills Center provides adult education and literacy classes, facilities, basic workforce preparedness courses, computer lab, literacy lab, and assessment services.
- The school district's Head Start program provides child care, early childhood education classes, facilities, staff training, recruitment, and outreach.
- The City's Public Libraries provide library cards, parenting workshops (reading, literature, etc.), and field trips for children.
- The Children's Home Society provides recruitment and referrals for child care.
- The American Red Cross provides staff training and workshops for parents.
- The Long Beach Literacy Council provides literacy workshops and tutoring services.
- The National Center for Family Literacy provides technical assistance and assistance in the dissemination of best practices.
- California State University at Long Beach provides Family Literacy participants with training in computers. (The parents receiving this training earn wages that have led to self-sufficiency.)

Initially, the Literacy Program was funded by Even Start, the Family Independence Initiative, the Knight Foundation, and federal Welfare-to-Work grants. Currently it is funded through Even Start and the Workforce Investment Act. Funding for the City's Welfare-to-Work program ended with the termination of the federal program. The City's Workforce Development Bureau continues to support the Literacy Program by providing office space and a City Literacy Liaison who continues to provide family literacy services to welfare recipients and low-income,

low-literacy families. A newly developed literacy center at the One-Stop Center will provide literacy and parenting resources for families, as well as tutoring services.

In March the National Conference on Family Literacy (NCFL), which was held in Long Beach, was addressed by a City employee currently working on an Associate in Arts degree. A former welfare recipient and participant in the Family Literacy Program, she gave a moving account of her journey from welfare to self-sufficiency to the 2,000 conference attendees. The NCFL has featured the City's program in one of its publications and on the NCFL website.

Information is available from Ray O. Worden, Manager, Workforce Development Bureau, at (562) 570-7750 or Ray_Worden@longbeach.gov.

METRO LOUISVILLE-JEFFERSON COUNTY
MAYOR JERRY ABRAMSON

Family Works

Family Works is a Welfare-to-Work initiative established to increase child support payments from non-custodial parents who have children on, or eligible for, public assistance. Intensive case management services are designed to increase child support payments through an array of Welfare-to-Work programs that help non-custodial parents secure career employment. While the primary goals of the program are to upgrade employment and increase child support payments (and thus reduce welfare dependence), enhancing the non-custodial parents' relationship with their children is a significant feature and added benefit of the program.

In Kentucky, as in other states, over 96 percent of welfare payments go to families characterized as single parent households headed by women. Family Works is one of a very few social service programs focusing on the non-custodial parents (the vast majority of whom are men) with children on, or eligible for, welfare. The rationale for this approach is that enhancing employment through education, training, and career development activities will increase employment income with corresponding increases in child support payments, thus indirectly reducing the need for welfare to provide support.

In early 1998 the local Private Industry Council (now KentuckianaWorks), in partnership with local and State government and interested non-profit agencies, convened a task force to develop an integrated welfare-to-work plan for the entire community. After months of effort, a comprehensive plan was drafted and submitted to the U.S. Department of Labor, and Louisville-Jefferson County became one of only 50 communities in the nation to be awarded federal Welfare-to-Work grants in that initial award cycle. Actual program implementation was begun in January 1999 through a contract with the local Workforce Investment Board.

Louisville Metro Human Services, which administers Family Works, developed the local "case management" model for the program in response to a request for proposal from the Workforce Investment Board. The program works in collaboration with the Turning It Around (TIA) program administered by Louisville Metro Corrections and the Jefferson District Family Court. TIA is considered an ideal partner in that it serves non-custodial parents who are court-active for non-payment of child support. The program is based on the premise that incarcerating non-custodial parents for non-support is often counter-productive. Enrollees in TIA become eligible for the Home Incarceration Program and must agree to make weekly child support payments and to attend weekly classes covering topics such as life skills and cooperative parenting.

Family Works services for non-custodial parents are designed to increase child support payments through an array of Welfare-to-Work programs subsidized by KentuckianaWorks. Services include career assessment, educational upgrade, vocational and technical training, budget and legal counseling, substance abuse treatment and access to a 24-hour help-line and a Resource Bank for emergency financial assistance. The program is currently staffed with six full-time case managers. Caseloads range from 60 to 80 clients per manager depending on client activity in that particular caseload.

Family Works has grown incrementally since it started in January 1999. The initial challenge was to recruit clients who were willing to engage in case management, and while the program has had some success in doing this, a number of challenges remain. Getting clients engaged in education and training in order to improve their employment, for example, can be very time consuming when the client population is often not well motivated and frequently has limited education and work skills. In addition, many clients have already accumulated significant child support arrearages prior to entering Family Works and are required to continue working in order to be eligible for services, including education and training benefits.

Successful "outcomes" under the current program contract include 1) the recruitment of 25 new clients each month, 2) a 70 percent job retention rate at six months of employment, and 3) an eight percent wage gain for clients retaining employment for six months. Program staff have enrolled over 125 clients in the current fiscal year with 250 clients (including clients from the prior fiscal year) remaining active in case management. Achieving significant wage gains in the current economy has been much more challenging, but reported wage gains for the first half of the current year have averaged five percent.

Jefferson County's integrated Welfare-to-Work plan, which incorporated Family Works and a network of other services, resulted from a collaborative effort of local and State governments, the regional Workforce Investment Board, and local non-profit agencies with an interest in workforce and welfare reform. Metro officials say it illustrates how cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems benefits the entire community.

Information is available from Joanne Weis, Director, Louisville Metro Human Services, at (502) 574-6022 or Joanne.weis@loukymetro.org.

NIA Center

The NIA Center is an economic opportunity campus whose mission is "to provide a seamless one-stop environment that builds on the strength of area residents to enhance business growth and development, to cultivate a marketable workforce and improve mobility through increased access to public transportation." This "one stop shop" for employment, job training, transportation, business start-up and economic growth and development has assisted hundreds of working families living in an area targeted for revitalization.

All entities housed in the NIA Center address the needs of the community:

- Member's First credit union addresses the lack of financial services available to low-income workers. As little as $10 is needed to open a savings account. Services available include free debt and budget counseling, free tax preparation, and access to an Individual Account Partnership.

- The Transit Authority of River City (TARC) operates a neighborhood travel center designed to alleviate the transportation problems of working families. The Night Owl Service provides customized transportation services to cover second- and third-shift jobs located miles away from the residents' homes and not on regular bus routes.

TARC also offers Saturday hours, special fare-saver passes, and senior citizen identification cards.

- Career Resources, Inc. (CRI) operates a One-Stop Center in the NIA Center. The One-Stop offers a full range of employment and training services under the Workforce Investment Act. Community residents have access to the Internet, BrainGain (an electronic job matching system), and workshops that give workers the tools required for an effective job search. Occupation skills training focuses on the occupations in demand in the local labor market. To bridge the digital divide, the Digital Boost program at CRI prepares and certifies individuals in basic technology skills.

- To meet additional educational needs of the community, the Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) offer GED classes during the day and in the evening. In an effort to encourage those in need of a GED, JCPS has frequently provided GED testing free of charge.

- The Louisville Enterprise Group offers established small businesses consulting services, gap financing assistance, pre- and post-loan counseling and affordable office space in the NIA Center. Entrepreneurs are coached on day-to-day business operations and financial management to foster company growth.

- The Metro Business Resource Center is a joint venture of the Louisville/Jefferson County Metro Government, the United States Small Business Administration, the Service Corps of Retired Executives, and the Small Business Development Center. The Resource Center offers prospective small business owners on-site counseling, a business start-up library, assistance with business development plans, and financial consultation.

The funding is as varied as the organizations within the NIA Center. A mixture of private and government-funded initiatives supports all the services available to the working families who use the Center.

Information is available from Anna Larson, Project Director, KentuckianaWorks, at (502) 574-2900 or anna.larson@loukymetro.org.

COUNTY OF MAUI
MAYOR ALAN ARAKAWA

Maui-to-Work Program

An example of a successful Maui County effort to assist working families is found in a collaboration of community partners that comprise the Maui-to-Work Program. Part of Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., the program is funded by the U.S. Department of Labor to provide employment assistance and ancillary support services to the most disadvantaged families whose children receive cash welfare. Its main objectives are to improve each participant's long-term employment and earnings capacity, and to help them obtain and permanently retain employment.

Now in its third year of operation, the MtW Program has served more than 345 participants and placed more than 200 in unsubsidized permanent employment. An important outcome of the program for the community has been the successful infusion of new employment development services to assist low-income long-term welfare recipients. These services have had a significant positive impact on efforts to reduce the number of families dependent on welfare benefits. MtW participants have received needed educational and skills enhancement training and direct supportive services to help them achieve independence and self-sufficiency.

One of the most difficult challenges posed by the federal Welfare-to-Work initiative was the product of insufficient planning for the integration of TANF resources with the WtW program. This resulted in most WtW programs encountering significant problems in locating, recruiting, determining eligibility for, and enrolling enough eligible participants to meet their original projections. To overcome these problems, the MtW program created special outreach and enrollment strategies utilizing government and other community resources. Strategies include:

- $ monthly meetings with the Chamber of Commerce and direct contacts with business managers and employees to encourage referral of persons on welfare;
- $ distribution of program information in supermarkets on welfare check and food stamp distribution days;
- $ distribution of program information at job fairs;
- $ placement of program posters in pediatricians' offices, laundromats, shopping malls, public buildings, and on public transit buses;
- $ placement of a staff member at the TANF office to process referrals;
- $ production and placement of radio ads, newspaper ads, and public service announcements for television; and
- $ maintenance of a website with complete program and enrollment information.

Information is available from Alice L. Lee, Director, Department of Housing and Human Concerns, at (808) 270-7805.

METRO GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE
MAYOR BILL PURCELL

First Day Initiative

Nashville's First Day initiative helps parents and students begin the school year together, sets the stage for stronger parental involvement throughout the year, and provides working families an opportunity to participate in school activities. Based on the knowledge that parental involvement is key to student achievement, First Day activities focus on making it easier for parents to get involved in schools and include a competition to increase membership in Parent-Teacher Organizations. The Mayor's First Day Festival, a City-wide celebration, marks the opening of the school year.

Mayor Purcell launched the First Day initiative in August 2000 in recognition of the key roles that parental and public involvement play in the success of both students and the school system. Believing that education is the most important thing Nashville does as a city, the Mayor views the first day of school, therefore, as the most important day on the City's civic calendar.

The Civil Service Commission, at the Mayor's request, adopted a policy to provide municipal employees three hours of leave time to go their children's schools on the first day, and an additional six hours of leave to attend teacher conferences or school activities during the year. The Metro Government of Nashville was joined by the City's largest private employer, Vanderbilt University, and the Greater Nashville Chamber of Commerce in granting leave on the first day of school and, following the example set that first year, many of the City's other major employers now grant similar leave to their employees. Among these are HCA Corp., Ingram Industries, First Tennessee Bank, AmSouth Bank, Dupont, Shop at Home Inc., Creative Artists Agency, and the Greater Nashville Association of Realtors.

The City's First Day initiative also includes an effort to encourage schools to enroll parents in Parent-Teacher Organizations. For the past three years, under a partnership with Dell, new computers are awarded to the schools with the largest increase in PTO enrollment on the first day of school.

The signature event marking the beginning of the school year is the Mayor's First Day Festival at Nashville's Gaylord Entertainment Center. The festival is a City-wide celebration for students and families, offering them an opportunity to enjoy educational games, get free school supplies, register for library cards, listen to music, and kick off the new year on a positive note.

During the first Festival, the Mayor greeted 10,000 parents, children, teachers and school officials as they streamed through the arena doors. The event grows in size each year, topping 13,000 attendees last August.

Information is available from Marc Everett Hill, Director, Mayor's Office of Children and Youth, at (615) 862-6000 or marc.hill@nashville.gov.

CITY OF NEW HAVEN
MAYOR JOHN DESTEFANO, JR.

Universal Access to Early Care and Education

The Mayor's Task Force on Universal Access to Early Care and Education was established by the Mayor and the Superintendent of Schools in September 2000. Its mission was to develop a plan to ensure that all New Haven children arrive at kindergarten with the skills and support they need to be successful. The key goals of the Task Force include increasing the supply of preschool, infant and toddler care; improving the quality of care both in centers and in home-based settings; establishing a funding collaborative to explore strategies for financing early care and education; and expanding the existing New Haven School Readiness Council.

A resource team of more than 60 people with expertise in early childhood education, child development, and family support was formed to advise the 18-member group. The Task Force met in work groups to identify key issues and strategies, and held a public hearing to obtain community input to the planning process; the hearing was attended by more than 70 people.

Among the key issues that were identified through this Task Force process were: greater choice for parents and families; greater attention to the needs of infants and toddlers; higher quality care, both in centers and in home-based settings; higher staff salaries and better benefits to improve caregiver recruitment and retention; expanded family support services; higher child care subsidy rates; increased employer efforts to create family-friendly workplaces; and improved data collection to monitor the progress of these initiatives.

The Task Force then used these community concerns to develop a series of recommendations for actions to be taken over the next five years in order to reach five major goals.

1. Ensure access to high quality early care and education for all children ages three to five. Key steps include:

    - expanding training and technical assistance to child care centers to increase the number that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children;
    - serving an additional 700 children with full-day programs through Head Start or other providers over the course of several years;
    - supporting the development of new facilities;
    - expanding the number of licensed home-based providers;
    - promoting care during nontraditional hours; and
    - pursuing additional State funding to raise teacher salaries.

2. Ensure that children from birth to age three have expanded access to early care and a continuum of services to support their healthy development. The strategies in this area are similar to those for the expansion of quality programming for preschoolers listed above.

3. Expand Family Resource Center programs and other family support efforts to provide all parents and home-based providers with access to a continuum of education and supportive services.

4. Pursue a legislative and administrative reform agenda that addresses:

    - increasing child care reimbursement rates;
    - doubling quality enhancement funding;
    - expanding the School Readiness Program;
    - expanding HUSKY, the State Children's Health Insurance Program in Connecticut;
    - streamlining the licensing process, especially for home-based care providers; and
    - implementing strategies to increase compensation for qualified teachers.

5. Expand the role of the New Haven School Readiness Council to implement the recommendations of the Task Force and create a unified early education and care system. Key steps include:

    - providing additional resources to expand the staff of the Council;
    - establishing a funding collaborative to secure resources from federal, State, foundation and other private resources;
    - integrating the New Haven Child Development Program with programs administered by the Board of Education, particularly around staff training and compensation, facilities, accreditation and funding;
    - creating a public-private partnership to engage the private sector in addressing the child care needs of employees and the community; and
    - collecting data to evaluate programs and ensure positive outcomes for children.

The School Readiness Council is now in the second year of implementation of the Task Force recommendations. Efforts to implement the plan have resulted in hiring a child care specialist to monitor the quality in all day care settings in New Haven; increasing the number of child care slots by 123 in the last year; and the distribution of "tool kits" to unlicensed child care providers to help them improve quality and obtain licensure.

Information is available from Sheila Allen Bell, Community Services Administrator, at (203) 946-7907 or sbell@newhavenct.net.

CITY OF NEWARK, CALIFORNIA
MAYOR DAVID W. SMITH

Ash Street Park Summer Recreation and Nutrition Program

The Ash Street Park Summer Recreation and Nutrition Program is a free program which specifically targets children living in the City's Ash Street area where more than half of the households fall below the poverty line.

Located in the Ash Street Park, the program operates each year for seven weeks, Monday through Friday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Age-appropriate activities available to the children each day include literacy (the program receives a Reading is Fundamental grant each year), cultural education, arts and crafts, science and nature, recreation, and basic life skills. The program targets children between five and 15 years of age, but any child under the age of 18 who visits the park receives a free hot lunch.

The program also offers jobs as team leaders and junior team leaders to teens in the area, many of whom were participants in the program as they were growing up. The goal is for these older children to have an opportunity to work and develop leadership skills that they will use throughout their lives.

The low-income Ash Street area was chosen as the location for the program because it had been plagued by crime, vandalism and unrest. The program offers the children living with these conditions structure, education, and fun. It helps to keep them off the streets and provides them with activities that promote self-esteem, tolerance, and accountability. An elementary school principal in the area reports that "an analysis of CTBS (Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills) scores indicates greater than expected student academic growth since the inception of the Ash Street program."

For the past 10 years the program has operated successfully as a cooperative effort of the City, volunteers and other community members, and the non-profit Friends for Ash Street Community Enrichment (FACE), founded to support the children in the area. Funding for the program is provided by the City and FACE, and by donors who contribute several thousand dollars each year.

Information is available from Karen Moraida, Senior Recreation Supervisor, at (510) 742-4432 or karen.moraida@neward.org.

CITY OF NORWALK
MAYOR ALEX A. KNOPP

Norwalk AfterSchool Alliance

Founded in 2001, the Norwalk AfterSchool Alliance is a City-wide volunteer collaborative of more than 40 organizations that are working together to expand and improve out-of-school-time offerings for the City's K-12 students.

Norwalk's 82,000 residents are of varied racial, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. In most families with school-age children, both parents work, and so need a safe place for their children to be after school, and before an adult returns home. While many after-school programs and other out-of-school-time activities are offered in Norwalk, the demand for these services far exceeds what is available.

There are 8,000 elementary and middle school students in the public school system. The Norwalk AfterSchool Alliance has found that about 1,700 of them are regularly participating in after-school activities. In a fall 2001 survey of elementary school families, the Alliance learned that only 25 percent were using before-school and/or after-school care, and that almost half (47 percent) wanted child care services. In addition, the survey showed that 65 percent of the families wanted homework help for their children, 79 percent wanted sports or physical activities, and 88 percent wanted enrichment activities. Norwalk officials say there is also a growing recognition of the role that after-school programs can play to support children academically.

The Alliance brought together almost every organization providing and/or supporting after-school programming in the City to work toward increasing the quantity and quality of out-of-school-time offerings. It is coordinated by one paid, part-time staff member. Members participate in monthly meetings (attendance averages 25 members) and serve on task forces that are currently focused on Training, Quality and Evaluation, Arts, Public Information, and Funding. Support for the Alliance comes from the United Way of Norwalk and Wilton, the Fairfield County Community Foundation, the Mayor's Office, the Norwalk Public Schools, and fees for services paid by Alliance members.

The Alliance has published a "Blueprint for Action" informing the community of after-school issues and recommending a course of action to address them. Currently, it is:

- Providing information on offerings to the community – publishing a directory of after-school programs for elementary students, a middle school directory, a catalogue of arts courses offered to middle school students, and general publications for the public.
- Providing training to after-school staff – offering a two-day City-wide conference last June and, during the year, offering a series of workshops on State licensing requirements, academic needs, positive youth development, and administrative support. Each training session includes an evaluation component to gauge the effectiveness of the training. A training workshop is scheduled this June at Norwalk

Community College, with modules for administrators, summer staff (including youth), and line professionals.

- Expanding and improving offerings – focusing initially on having professional artists (photographers, illustrators, writers, dancers, and musicians) provide specialized programs at low cost to any after-school program that wishes to participate.
- Coordinating academic initiatives – understanding that in order to improve students' academic achievement it is necessary to improve communication between schools and after-school programs. The Alliance has developed a structured time and accountability system for addressing homework and academics.
- Providing evaluation tools and technical assistance to help programs set and reach their goals.
- Seeking funding for services that can be shared by most of its members. The Alliance also brokers services that help defray the cost of running programs.

Norwalk officials offer the Alliance as a successful model for bringing diverse organizations together to solve common problems on a community-wide basis. Through the Alliance, they say, best practices are shared, technical assistance and resources are more easily accessed, and information is more easily dispersed.

Information is available from Ivy Burke, Coordinator, Norwalk AfterSchool Alliance, Norwalk Public Schools, at (203) 854-4117 or ivyb@norwalkpublicschools.net.

CITY OF OAKLAND
MAYOR JERRY BROWN

Family Independence Initiative

The Family Independence Initiative (FII) works with families in Oakland who organize themselves into peer groups and work together to achieve self-sufficiency. As each group makes progress toward its goals and families show their commitment to improving their lives, FII provides monetary awards, resources, and connections to new opportunities. FII distinguishes itself not only by helping families to become economically self-sufficient, but also by helping them build the critical social ties that keep entire communities stable and healthy.

- FII invests directly in families, empowering them to make choices and establish control in their own lives.
- Families receive up to $3,000 per year, based on proven accomplishments.
- Training in financial planning is provided and the opportunity to open an Individual Development Account allows for a match for every dollar a family saves toward major assets.
- Families receive a home computer, basic computer training, and Internet access. Computers are used for education and for connecting to resources, as well as reporting household information to FII.

FII requires families to show their strengths, sets high expectations, and does not discourage success by disqualifying participants once they begin to show signs of improving their lives. Families are viewed as partners in this initiative, and are the the most important resource for understanding how families and communities become self-sufficient.

Access by groups to small amounts of flexible and unrestricted funds is considered key to FII's approach. Officials believe that providing direct funding to groups of families prompts leadership and action at the community level, and shows families that their efforts to improve their lives and their communities will be supported and rewarded. These small amounts of "catalytic capital" can be much less than that normally spent by cities on programs and services for "at-risk" families and neighborhoods. In addition, family- and group-led projects are expected to be much more effective and sustainable.

FII is a broad bi-partisan effort supported by City, County, State and federal governments and non-profit organizations and foundations. When Maurice Lim Miller, former Executive Director of Asian Neighborhood Design, first conceived of FII, Mayor Brown worked with him to establish the "Commission on Family Independence." Mayor Brown convened a diverse group of leaders from all levels of government, as well as the directors of private foundations and social service organizations. The Commission agreed that current service programs for low-income families were not always efficient or effective. Committed to working together to see families leave poverty, the Commission decided to adopt a "strength-based" approach and invest directly in low-income families as promising leaders and standard-bearers in their communities.

FII recently secured a CalWORKs waiver from the California Department of Social Services for a three-year "demonstration program" for welfare recipients in Alameda County.

With this waiver, no stipends, savings accounts or other resources from FII will negatively affect a family's benefits eligibility. The CalWORKs waiver will enable families to accumulate and retain assets more quickly, and make more rapid progress toward self-sufficiency. It is seen as a powerful tool to demonstrate for California and other states a new model for building sustainable pathways out of poverty.

In the view of officials in Oakland, while both the public and private sectors have spent billions on the poor in the form of needs-based services, they rarely have focused on assets and capitalized on the affinity and trust within communities, empowered the poor directly with monetary resources, or encouraged them to build wealth as a means of attaining self-sufficiency – all basic elements of FII.

Information is available from Andrea Youngdahl, Director of Human Services, at (510) 238-6112 or AYoungdahl@oaklandnet.com.

CITY OF OKLAHOMA CITY
MAYOR KIRK HUMPHREYS

Coalition for Increased Family Income

According to 2000 federal tax return data for Oklahoma City, 51 percent of filing taxpayers earned incomes of less than $31,150. The IRS estimates that approximately $18.5 million of Earned Income Tax Credit refunds were not received in Oklahoma City due to lack of knowledge of the program. Of those eligible for the credit, 48 percent used a paid preparer for high-cost refund loans. If all eligible citizens took advantage of the EITC, City officials say, over $86 million would be paid to working citizens and available for spending in the local economy.

City efforts in support of increasing public awareness and use of the EITC were focused in four areas:

- Assisting the IRS in working with local businesses, education, and non-profit organizations – On November 20, 2002 the City's Office of Workforce Development (OWD) hosted a meeting of 36 individuals representing local businesses and organizations. The meeting provided information about the EITC and related programs and gathered support for a community-wide effort to inform citizens about the EITC. Representatives of the IRS explained the EITC program. Those present also learned about Individual Development Accounts, financial literacy training classes offered by the Bank of Oklahoma in partnership with the Community Action Agency, and free tax preparation offered by the IRS through its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

- Providing information to the community-at-large – Mayor Humphreys proclaimed February as "Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Month" and the City's Office of Public Information and Marketing used the City's resources to disseminate EITC information to the general public. These efforts included providing information on the City's web site, with a link to the IRS web site; on the City's Channel 20, by running the IRS public service announcement; and in the February utility billing. IRS EITC brochures were distributed at City Hall, the Office of Workforce Development, and other central locations.

- Providing information to persons in targeted lower-income neighborhoods – The Community Action Agency of Oklahoma City (CAA OKC) was the lead agency in providing information to lower-income neighborhoods. The IRS trained 11 CAA OKC workers to provide free tax preparation at eight locations. CAA OKC provided flyers to all their clients and to several thousand Head Start parents. CAA OKC also provided information about the Individual Development Account program.

  The City provided a flyer with information about the EITC and the CAA OKC free tax preparation sites to all neighborhood associations through the Neighborhood Alliance and the South Oklahoma City Council of Neighborhoods. Community forums were held in conjunction with these groups.

The Weed and Seed Program provided EITC information to its clients at the Jeff Rominger Community Center and provided IRS brochures to the clients of the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program. Information was also distributed through the City's Building Blocks program.

- Providing information to City employees – 180 full-time and 397 part-time City employees have incomes that may meet the EITC program qualifications, and 180 Golf Course employees and 86 Zoo employees also may qualify. To provide EITC information to all City employees, the Office of Workforce Development worked with the City Manager's Office on an effort that included the distribution of a letter (along with employee W-2 forms in February) explaining the EITC and providing information on sites offering free income tax preparation, and asking department heads to explain the EITC to all employees at division, section or crew meetings.

Though still incomplete, reports from Community Action Agency sites show that 413 tax returns have been filed electronically this year (just 21 were filed last year) producing refunds of $504,288. The Coalition was also instrumental in the creation of a new tax preparation site targeting and serving the Hispanic community. This site prepared 211 returns producing $117,439 in refunds.

Information is available from Debi Holtzclaw, Marketing Coordinator, at (405) 297-2783 or debi.holtzclaw@okc.gov.

CITY OF PORTLAND
MAYOR VERA KATZ

Jobs and Ladders Program

The City of Portland, in collaboration with the Workforce Investment Board, has developed career advancement opportunities for unemployed, underemployed and incumbent workers committed to working in the health care industry. This Jobs and Ladders Program was implemented in two phases: Phase 1 concentrated on providing a range of customized career advancement opportunities, job placement, and the development of an employer-based career center for incumbent workers at Oregon Health Sciences University (OHSU). Phase 2 provided Certified Nursing Assistant training, job placement, and career advancement information to low-income housing residents in the Portland MSA. The initiative was funded by the Workforce Investment Act, employer funds, union contributions, two State Current Workforce Skills Development Grants, and a Department of Labor Sectoral Grant.

Through this initiative the program identified a range of barriers that prevent individuals from accessing job placement or career advancement opportunities. In Phase 1, with its focus on incumbent workers at OHSU, program staff found that:

- $ incumbent workers do not know about promotions within their own organization despite chronic vacancies in particular positions;
- $ incumbent workers cannot advance because there is a dearth of part-time training opportunities;
- $ traveling to a training provider after work is difficult, time-consuming, and expensive;
- $ knowing how to identify career paths and skills requirements, or where to access training, can be overwhelming.

In Phase 2, with its focus on Portland's low-income housing residents, staff found that:

- $ while the health care industry offers many career advancement opportunities, many low-income individuals do not know how to get started;
- $ residents living in low-income housing may have multiple barriers to career advancement, but do not access workforce development resources;
- $ residents want to move out of low-income housing and into unsubsidized housing, but obtaining higher-wage jobs is difficult.

Partnerships with employers, unions, housing providers, training providers and workforce developers were critical to the success of both phases of the program. Phase 1 involved the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), OHSU, AFSCME Local 328, Portland Community College(PCC), New Care Directions, and SE Works. Specifically:

- $ AFSCME Local 328 worked with the WIB to identify chronic openings at OHSU, recruit incumbent workers for advanced training, and develop the OHSU Workforce Center;
- $ AFSCME and the WIB worked with PCC and New Care Directions to customize traditional training into part-time, on-site training;

- $ AFSCME worked with OHSU to guarantee job promotions for incumbent workers who graduated from training;
- $ AFSCME and the WIB worked with OHSU to obtain a commitment to develop a workforce center at OHSU for incumbent workers;
- $ SE Works, a local One-Stop, out-sourced staff to the OHSU Workforce Center to connect incumbent workers with critical workforce development resources.

Phase 2 placed talented low-income housing residents into CNA positions through partnerships with the WIB, OHSU, Kaiser Permanente, Legacy Health Systems, the Housing Authority of Portland-Goalpost, REACH CDC, Central City Concern, and SE Works. The WIB worked with:

- $ hospitals and New Care Directions to develop a hospital-based Certified Nursing Assistant training program and create an assessment strategy;
- $ the Housing Authority of Portland, REACH, Central City Concern and SE Works to recruit low-income housing residents into training;
- $ New Care Directions to provide a range of part-time and full-time training options;
- $ hospitals and New Care Directions to coordinate placement of graduates in stable employment with benefits; and
- $ hospitals and One-Stops to provide career advancement information to all training graduates.

Portland officials report that Jobs and Ladders provided short-term and long-term value to the individuals trained, the employer partners, training providers and the industry as a whole. During Phase 1 the program trained 60 incumbent workers to become Certified Nursing Assistants, Certified Medical Assistants, and Radiological Technologists. It provided 347 training opportunities in administrative support, communications and technology, allowing 30 employees to attain Information Technology certification. The program developed the Workforce Center at OHSU where incumbent workers access general workforce development resources, health care industry-specific information, basic skills classes, and computers. The Workforce Center is currently managed and sustained by OHSU and AFSCME.

In Phase 2 Jobs and Ladders trained 60 low-income housing residents to become Certified Nursing Assistants; 46 of these residents were trained in the hospitals. Of the 60 participants, 55 completed the program and, as of April 15th, 44 have passed the State Board Exam and received their license. Additionally, through the program, New Care Directions expanded its capacity and now provides job placement services in addition to CNA training. Officials believe their connections to area employers make them ideally qualified to place CNAs in high quality employment. All of the graduates of the program are now working with New Care Directions on job search and job placement.

In Portland, officials have learned that: 1) initiatives focusing on career paths with advancement opportunities will help a range of unemployed, underemployed and incumbent workers secure stable and sustainable employment; 2) unions can play a critical role in helping cities develop innovative career development and poverty alleviation strategies, and are uniquely positioned to both advocate for workers and provide resources for employers; 3) it is important to identify training providers who are willing to be flexible in customizing curriculum, able to schedule part-time or alternate hour classes, can provide employer-based training, and are

comfortable in working with "barriered" populations; and 4) invariably, program administrators must be prepared to modify the program at every step of the way.

For additional information contact Alison Gash with Worksystems at (503) 478-7319 or agash@worksystems.org, or Cary Harkaway at (503) 478-7368 or charkaway@worksystems.org.

CITY OF ROCHESTER
MAYOR WILLIAM A. JOHNSON, JR.

Greater Rochester Earned Income Credit Community Coalition

In the summer of 2002, the City, in collaboration with the United Way of Greater Rochester, held a series of community forums to build support for a local campaign to maximize the use of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit for eligible low-income working people. In the forums, City officials emphasized the loss of tax credit dollars to the community and the high fees paid for tax preparation and rapid access loans by those who could least afford them. The goals of the campaign that followed were to provide education and awareness and free tax preparation services, and to encourage asset-building within the target population.

The United Way, serving as the lead agency for the Earned Income Credit initiative, underwrote "hard" costs for the first year of operations, but with very significant volunteer and in-kind resources as a supplement; funding or underwriting partners will be sought for the second year.

The core group that has planned and overseen this new initiative with the City and the United Way includes Action for a Better Community, Ibero-American Action League, M&T Bank, Rochester City School District, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rural Opportunities, St. John Fisher College, and the YWCA. Numerous other community organizations have contributed space, staff time, volunteers, and other types of support. Included in this group are Brockport College, Catholic Family Center, Community Place of Greater Rochester, Downtown Presbyterian Church, Family Resource Centers, Hart Street Family Learning Center, HSBC Bank, Medical Motors Service, Monroe County Department of Social Services, Progressive Neighborhood Federal Credit Union, Single Volunteers of Rochester, SWAN (Southwest Area Neighborhood), Wilson Commencement Park, and the YMCA. The participation of two banks and a credit union added greatly to the new Coalition initiative by offering free savings accounts to filers and, in the case of one of the credit unions, at-cost rapid access loans.

This Earned Income Credit effort built on, and greatly expanded, the tax assistance previously provided by several non-profit organizations working independently of one another. These initiatives experienced high rates of turnover of both paid staff and volunteers, and the complexity of e-filing added to the challenge. The new Coalition was able to identify volunteers, retired and unemployed, with management experience; these individuals stepped in after the initiative was launched and devoted many hours each week to ensure that it ran smoothly. The initiative also made extensive use of two student interns, as well as accounting students and professors at area colleges.

In the first year of this coordinated community effort: 2,500 free tax returns were filed – more than twice the number filed the previous year; 150 volunteers were involved – more than three times the number the year before; returns filed resulted in $3 million for low-income households; and savings in tax preparation costs totaled $300,000.

Rochester officials involved in the Coalition recommend that others planning an earned income tax credit initiative:

- Start early, as peak tax filing season for the target population is late January through mid-February.
- Focus on fewer tax preparation sites that are open longer periods. (Rochester maintained more than 30 sites, most operating relatively few hours. Officials expect that next year, concentrating on a few well-placed sites that are open five or six days each week will make it easier to let people know where to go, and easier to train and support volunteers and maintain high quality assistance.)
- Clearly define roles and responsibilities for all involved (including volunteers, site hosts, and coalition partners).
- Strengthen ties to other asset-building tools (e.g., financial literacy training, credit repair, and Individual Development Accounts).

Information is available from Carla Johnson, Senior Employment & Training Coordinator, Bureau of Human Services, at (585) 428-6002 or johnsonc@cityofrochster.gov, or from Dianne Newhouse, EIC Project Coordinator, United Way of Greater Rochester, at (585) 242-6590 or Dianne.newhouse@uwrochester.org.

CITY OF SAN JOSE
MAYOR RON GONZALES

Smart Start San Jose

Smart Start San Jose (SSSJ) is an early education initiative designed to improve the quality of early childhood experiences for young children. The Mayor and City Council recently adopted *Investment in the Future: San Jose's Early Care and Education Strategic Work Plan*, which provides a comprehensive strategy to address the City's early care and education shortage.

SSSJ's contribution to the strategy is to create new family child care businesses and strengthen the business and program skills of providers that are in danger of going out of business. It is a multi-agency educational collaborative involving schools, parents, early childhood development professionals, businesses, community-based organizations, and the City. A 35-member volunteer community-based advisory group oversees the management, implementation, and evaluation of all program components.

All SSSJ services are provided at no charge to participants. The program is funded through the Community Development Block Grant, the City of San Jose General Fund, and with contributions from the San Jose Public Library, the San Jose and Mission Community Colleges, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. SSSJ is the first program in the area to use CDBG economic development funds to create new family child care businesses and retain existing businesses.

In fact, identifying appropriate funding was the primary barrier to SSSJ program development. The SSSJ collaborative was able to overcome this barrier by working closely with the City's CDBG staff to design a program that met the federal eligibility requirements for micro-enterprises.

In its five years of operation the program has created 63 new family child care businesses and improved the business and program skills of over 120 current providers. In total, more than 378 new early care and education spaces have been created in San Jose through the Family Child Care Program since 1998. In FY 2001 the program developed a Spanish language component to address the needs of the City's large monolingual Spanish-speaking population.

Information is available from Deborah T. Simon, Manager, Office on Early Childhood Services, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, at (408) 392-6757 or deobrah.simon@ci.sj.ca.us, or from Angel Rios, Jr., Superintendent, Youth Services Division, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, at (408) 392-6750 or angel.rios@ci.sj.ca.us.

CITY OF STAMFORD
MAYOR DANNEL P. MALLOY

Rippowam Park Apartments

Redeveloped under a pilot program to renovate deteriorated public housing, the Rippowam Park Apartments house 430 families in an affordable, safe and modern neighborhood. In the high-cost, housing-challenged community of Stamford, maintaining the supply of housing stock for low- and moderate-income families is critical.

In the mid-1990s, the Rippowam Park Apartments were in a spiral of disrepair with one quarter of the units legally uninhabitable. The balance of the units were riddled with building, health and safety code violations. Environmental remediation, lead abatement, and removal of 53 leaking underground fuel oil tanks were required. Crime and drug trafficking were rampant.

The State of Connecticut awarded Stamford $6.6 million to replace heating systems but provided no funds for additional renovations which, if not performed, would leave the units dilapidated. In view of this unacceptable situation, City officials initiated discussions with a private affordable housing developer. The resulting proposal, which leveraged the State's grant to obtain additional capital, led to the privatization (subject to City and agency oversight), rehabilitation, and transformation of the Rippowam Park Apartments.

By joining forces, the State, the City, the private developer, several non-profit organizations, and members of the community were able to successfully complete a project that none could have tackled alone.

- State legislation enabled the project to be privatized, the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development provided direct funding and authorized tax-exempt bonding and low-income housing tax credits, and Connecticut's Housing Finance Authority co-monitors Apartment operations.
- The City abated taxes to assist rent reductions, its Building, Health, and Environmental Departments provided code inspections and enforcement, and targeted community policing efforts significantly reduced criminal activity.
- The developer contributed its own capital and raised additional debt and equity from public and private corporations in order to complete the project and, for the benefit of tenant children, donated space in the on-site community center to a local non-profit day care provider.
- The Housing Authority, responsible for co-monitoring operations, issued bonds to finance development.
- The tenants facilitated the transition from public to private housing and coordinated a neighborhood watch program.

To transform the Rippowam Park Apartments into a state-of-the-art, affordable neighborhood, units were gut-remodeled, an on-site day care center was refurbished, and new landscaping and play areas were added. The community today is diverse, thriving, and fully occupied by approximately 1,500 residents. No tenant's income exceeds 60 percent of the area median income, and half are below 50 percent of the median.

The redevelopment of the Rippowam Park Apartments has led to significant changes within the City. In 2000 Mayor Malloy established the Task Force on Affordable Housing; the City passed an ordinance requiring that all affordable housing units removed from the market be replaced one for one; the land use boards have passed zoning ordinances that provide for "Inclusionary Zoning;" and developers are required to contribute to Stamford's affordable housing stock (for which they receive density bonuses).

Information is available form Ellen Bromley, Social Services Coordinator, at (203) 977-4029 or ebromley@ci.stamford.ct.us.

Every Child Matters Program

In 1997, the City of Stamford, in partnership with the United Way of Stamford, conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to determine the health and human service needs of the community. This assessment revealed that the single most serious human service need in the City was lack of health insurance. In response to this finding, the Mayor convened the Stamford Human Services Planning Council to address the issue. The Council, made up of a diverse coalition of community agencies, immediately recognized that the HUSKY program, like many State Children's Health Insurance Programs nationwide, was not successfully enrolling uninsured children. After reviewing the HUSKY program enrollment strategy, the Stamford Health Department took responsibility for putting together a local program to improve the enrollment of Stamford children. Thus was born the Every Child Matters program and, with it, the goal of insuring all children in Stamford, including the 2,500 found to be lacking health insurance.

The Health Department designed a unique school-based health insurance outreach system which capitalizes on existing stable and trusted relationships to link the families of uninsured children to HUSKY. Stamford has a Health Department-employed school nurse in every school. In partnership with these school nurses, principals, parent-faculty organizations, and other school-based resources, outreach workers have added 2,500 children to the Health Department health insurance database. The families of these children receive letters introducing them to the Every Child Matters program, and each family is then telephoned by outreach workers who offer to schedule personal appointments to assist them in submitting a HUSKY application. Families are also offered the direct assistance of a bilingual (Spanish/English) Health and Social Services Department employee; this is a critical element of the program, as the Hispanic population of the City has doubled in size since 1990, and national and local studies consistently indicate that this population has the lowest rate of health insurance coverage.

With the cooperation with the Connecticut Department of Social Services, outreach workers track all applications through processing, and workers are notified when insurance is granted and are made aware of impending renewal deadlines. By tracking families through their school-enrolled children, the program can more successfully maintain contact with HUSKY-enrolled families.

The goal of the Every Child Matters program is to insure every eligible child in Stamford. Since its inception, the program has directly contacted the families of over 2,000 children. Over

800 families have received follow-up telephone calls and/or have had face-to-face meetings with outreach workers. Over 400 Stamford children in five schools are now covered by health insurance as a direct result of Every Child Matters – an approximately 400 percent greater enrollment rate than existed prior to the program's inception.

Stamford officials believe the Every Child Matters program is the most efficient and cost-effective program of its kind in Connecticut, with no other program directly responsible for enrolling as many children in Connecticut's HUSKY program in the past two years.

Information is available from Dr. Anthony Iton, Director of Health & Social Services, at (203) 977-4396 or aiton@ci.stamford.ct.us.

Healthy Homes Initiative

Stamford's Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI) has identified more than 8,000 children living in environmental "hotspots" and is actively targeting these areas in order to reduce the City's rate of pediatric asthma – a rate 35 percent higher than that of surrounding communities in Fairfield County. In fact, Stamford's children are hospitalized for asthma 2.4 times more often than are children in neighboring communities. The Stamford Health and Social Services Department has made pediatric asthma its number one health service priority.

With a Health Department nurse in every school, the Department has been able to develop a detailed health database that includes every school-aged child in Stamford. Additionally, every multi-family dwelling, rooming house, hotel, and tax-abatement property in Stamford is licensed by the Health Department. All pediatric asthma cases have been mapped using GIS technology, as have the City's housing code violations. These maps have been electronically superimposed to produce a compelling geographic picture of environmentally-related childhood disease. By employing this targeted data-driven strategy, the Health Department has been able to prioritize its daily work.

A disproportionate share of Stamford's asthma cases are clustered in areas of older, high-density, multi-family dwellings which are home to about 8,800 children. The target areas have asthma prevalence rates nearly 200 percent greater than the overall City rate. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) has emphasized that asthmatic individuals living in multi-family housing units frequently do not have control over their indoor environments, and has recommended that intervention programs specifically address real world living conditions in poor and inner city populations. Stamford's HHI does just that. Through it, the families of asthmatic children in the target area are contacted by a Health Department nurse, and each is offered a comprehensive asthma intervention that includes:

- a standardized baseline pediatric asthma assessment;
- one-on-one community nurse education covering the environmental triggers of asthma;
- tools to reduce the child's exposure to triggers;
- tools to aid in the self-management and monitoring of asthma;

- a home inspection by a Stamford Health Department housing code inspector focusing on structural or code-related issues that may not be within the immediate control of the tenant;
- medical case management services including referral to a pediatric pulmonary specialist for clinical evaluation and management;
- an opportunity for a scholarship to an asthma summer camp;
- an opportunity to participate in the Open Airways Program; and
- a follow-up assessment to determine the effectiveness of the intervention.

Property owners that opt to participate in the program are able to take advantage of small ($1,500) grants or larger ($5,000) loans to subsidize hazard reduction and code compliance work.

In brief, Stamford's Healthy Homes Initiative utilizes the best of GIS technology to identify at-risk children, builds upon the City's expertise in residential health and safety programs, establishes critical community partnerships to leverage resources, and creates a new incentive program for owners of deteriorating urban properties to abate known environmental health risks.

Information is available from Dr. Anthony Iton, Director of Health and Social Services, at (203) 977-4396 or aiton@ci.stamford.ct.us.

Stamford School Readiness Program

The Stamford School Readiness Program (SSRP) provides over 350 three- and four-year-olds from families at all economic levels with full-day or part-day education programs. In 1996, the Stamford Public Schools Research Department released an in-depth report on early care and education which showed that nearly 40 percent of Stamford's children were entering kindergarten with no preschool experience; it also showed that children who attended preschool significantly outscored classmates who did not. A review of the underserved population revealed an overwhelming representation of minority and low-income children. A survey conducted by Stamford's Early Childhood Council confirmed these results and indicated that the limited availability of quality early care and education opportunities directly affected both welfare and working families.

In response, the Mayor spearheaded an initiative to bring quality early childhood education to all children in the City. With support from the Stamford Public Schools, the State of Connecticut, and corporate, non-profit and private communities, the Stamford School Readiness Program opened in September 1998. The development and implementation of SSRP was truly collaborative: Stamford's effort to increase the availability of early learning opportunities coincided with the State's passage of school readiness legislation providing funding for preschool education in priority school districts. The City donated an office building to house the program, the local non-profit Childcare Learning Centers (CLC) obtained a $5 million loan from the Connecticut Health and Education Facilities Administration to fund extensive renovations, and the Mayor worked closely with local corporations to secure sizeable donations in order to reduce the large loan amount. The Stamford Public Schools funds eight teachers who oversee curriculum and work in the classrooms. CLC administers the program, and

private citizens, teachers, legislators and corporate representatives serve on the SSRP Advisory Council.

The program now operates in a state-of-the-art building with an open layout, a professional kitchen, an on-site health clinic, and five learning studios focused on literacy, the arts, earth sciences, cooking and woodworking. Parent involvement seminars and workshops are important aspects of the program. Fees are assessed on a sliding scale, and scholarships are funded with private donations. The SSRP is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and has been recognized as a model preschool by the Connecticut State Department of Education.

In 2002, the Stamford Public Schools released a research report indicating that 80 percent of Stamford's children now enter kindergarten with a preschool education -- a gain of 22.5 percent since the 1996 report. Additionally, SSRP graduates, compared to students with no preschool experience:

- demonstrate higher achievement in reading;
- are half as likely to be held back a grade;
- miss fewer days of school; and
- outperform their peers as they advance each year.

The program is also successful in reaching Stamford's previously underserved population, with

- 43 percent of students from Hispanic families,
- 31 percent from black families,
- 15 percent from white families,
- 15 percent from multi-racial or other backgrounds,
- 82 percent from families with a household income below half the State median income, and
- 96 percent from families with at least one employed parent.

Information is available from Kelly Schwartz, Special Assistant to the Mayor and Chair, Stamford School Readiness Program, at (203) 977-5168 or kschwartz@ci.stamford.ct.us.

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